

federal program that encouraged students to work while completing their educations.

Times A-Changing

The sixties brought many technical advances to library services. The library purchased its first coin-operated photocopier and microfilm reader. The library already offered record albums for checkout. Now filmstrips, as well as 16- and 8-millimeter films, were added to the audiovisual fare. Both the city and the county began to flirt with the idea of using computers to simplify tasks. Librarians dreamed of computerized catalogs and check-out systems.

By the mid-sixties, the WLI library was already critically out of space. The *Wilmington Morning Star* reported that "as the largest educational agency in the community, the library needs your attention and consideration. Known as the 'People's University' with no scholastic requirements other than the ability to read, is it to continue to fall short of your requests for service?"



*Bursting at the Seams
1965*



Vertisha Riggins During her tenure, she promoted African-American history through collections and programming. Her weekly American history programs, "Great Decisions," were popular with members of both races.

Library services continued to grow with the community, but space was at a standstill. It took sixteen more years of cramped quarters before a new facility became a reality.

In 1966 Mrs. Cotton retired as head librarian at the Red Cross branch library. Vertisha Riggins, graduate of Atlanta University Library School, replaced her.



Bookmobile purchased in 1968

In 1968, the library acquired a new bookmobile.

New Building for Carolina Beach

The Carolina Beach Library moved into a new building in September 1970. Previously, the beach library had been housed in the Town Hall and a two-story wooden building.



Proposed Carolina Beach Library, 1967

Funds for this community effort to obtain a modern library came from donations of individuals and organizations, benefits and budget appropriations

from the Carolina Beach Town Council. Many locals provided labor, landscaping and construction materials.

Mrs. Barbara Russell was chairman of the building committee, which was fundraising until the last minute in order to make the building ready to receive 2,500 books.

*Carolina Beach Library
New building opened in 1970*



Reaching Out

A first floor deposit library was opened in 1973 at Solomon Towers, an 11-story building designed to house low-income retirees. The book-room was supplied by extension librarians and operated by volunteers who lived in the building.

Eighth Street Center, a government-funded community center, was opened the same year. The center included a neighborhood library. Linda Lewis, who became a long-time library employee, was hired to manage the library.



*Eighth Street
Community Center Library*

The next year the library purchased a cargo van for the

extension department. The van allowed library staff to bring traveling story times to daycare centers, provide programming to nursing homes and deliver more books than ever.



*Lucy Parker and Joan Coco
bring books to young readers*

More Trouble Ahead

In July 1975 New Hanover County began constructing the new Law Enforcement Center adjacent to the library's rear parking lot.

As the construction crew began pounding the pilings into the ground, the library parking lot began to crack.

Shortly thereafter, the WLI building began to split. The rear addition added in 1956 began to separate from the main building.



*WLI library addition
held together with duct tape*